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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

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In re Patent No. 7,476,906 :
Furst, et al. : DECISION DISMISSING
Application No. 10/501,209 : REQUEST FOR
Issue Date: January 13, 2009 : RECONSIDERATION OF
Filed: January 6, 2005 : PATENT TERM ADJUSTMENT
Attorney Docket No. : UNDER 37 CFR 1.705
MAIKP141WOUS :

This is in response to the APPLICATION FOR PATENT TERM ADJUSTMENT INCLUDING UNDER 37 CFR § 1.705(d), filed March 13, 2009. Patentees request that the determination of patent term adjustment be corrected from one hundred sixty-six (166) days to three hundred ninety-one (391) days.

The request for reconsideration of patent term adjustment is DISMISSED with respect to making any change in the patent term adjustment determination under 35 U.S.C. § 154(b) of 166 days.

BACKGROUND

This application was filed on January 6, 2005. On February 19, 2008, a request for continued examination (RCE) was filed. On January 13, 2009, the application matured into U.S. Patent No. 7,476,906, with a revised patent term adjustment of 166 days. The Office determined that the 225 days of Office delay pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) and 37 CFR 1.702(b)^{1,2} overlaps with

¹ Pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B), 37 CFR 1.702(b) provides, in pertinent part, that:

Failure to issue a patent within three years of the actual filing date of the application. Subject to the provisions of 35 U.S.C. 154(b) and this subpart, the term of an original patent shall be adjusted if the issuance of the patent was delayed due to the failure of the Office to issue a patent within three years after the date on which the application was filed under

the 317 days of Office delay pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(A) and 37 CFR 1.702(a)(1)^{3,4} accorded prior to the filing of the request for continued examination. As such, the Office allowed only entry of the adjustment of 317 days. No additional days of patent term adjustment were entered at issuance under the three-year pendency provision. Given the applicant delay of 151 days, the patent issued with a revised patent term adjustment of 166 (317 - 151) days.

On March 13, 2009, patentees timely submitted this request for reconsideration of patent term adjustment (with required fee). See 37 CFR 1.705(d). Patentees aver that the correct number of days of patent term adjustment is 542 days under the court's interpretation of the overlap provision as set forth in Wyeth v. Dudas, 580 F. Supp. 2d 138, 88 U.S.P.Q. 2d 1538 (D.D.C. 2008). Patentees assert that pursuant to Wyeth, periods of delay under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(A) and 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) overlap only if they occur on the same calendar day or days. Patentees state that the total period of Office delay is the sum of the period of Three Year Delay (225 days) and the period of examination delay (317 days) to the extent that these periods of delay are not overlapping. Patentees contend no periods of delay

35 U.S.C. 111(a) or the national stage commenced under 35 U.S.C. 371(b) or (f) in an international application, but not including:

(i) any time consumed by continued examination of the application requested by the applicant under section 132(b).

² As of the filing of the RCE on February 19, 2008, the application was pending three years and 225 days.

³ 37 CFR § 1.702, provides grounds for adjustment of patent term due to examination delay under the Patent Term Guarantee Act of 1999 (original applications, other than designs, filed on or after May 29, 2000).

(a) Failure to take certain actions within specified time frames. Subject to the provisions of 35 U.S.C. 154(b) and this subpart, the term of an original patent shall be adjusted if the issuance of the patent was delayed due to the failure of the Office to:

(1) Mail at least one of a notification under 35 U.S.C. 132 or a notice of allowance under 35 U.S.C. 151 not later than fourteen months after the date on which the application was filed under 35 U.S.C. 111(a) or fulfilled the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 371 in an international application;

⁴ A first Office action was not mailed until January 17, 2007, fourteen months and 317 days after the date of completion, January 6, 2005.

attributable to grounds specified under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(A) and 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) overlap. Therefore, patentees maintain that they are entitled to the periods of adjustment under both 37 CFR 1.703(a) and (b) for a total patent term adjustment of 391 (542 (317 + 225) - 151) days.

OPINION

Patentees' interpretation of the period of overlap has been considered, but found inconsistent with the Office's interpretation of the overlap provision, 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A). 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A) limits the adjustment of patent term, as follows:

to the extent that the periods of delay attributable to grounds specified in paragraph (1) overlap, the period of any adjustment granted under this subsection shall not exceed the actual number of days the issuance of the patent was delayed.

As explained in *Explanation of 37 CFR 1.703(f)*⁵ and of the United States Patent and Trademark Office Interpretation of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A), 69 Fed. Reg. 34283 (June 21, 2004), the Office interprets 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A) as permitting either patent term adjustment under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(A)(i)-(iv), or patent term adjustment under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B), but not as permitting patent term adjustment under both 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(A)(i)-(iv) and 154(b)(1)(B). Accordingly, the Office implements the overlap provision as follows:

If an application is entitled to an adjustment under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B), the entire period during which the application was pending (except for periods excluded under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B)(i)-(iii)), and not just the period beginning three years after the actual filing date of the application, is the period of delay under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) in determining whether periods of delay

⁵ Likewise, 37 CFR 1.703(f) provides that:

To the extent that periods of delay attributable to the grounds specified in §1.702 overlap, the period of adjustment granted under this section shall not exceed the actual number of days the issuance of the patent was delayed.

overlap under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A). Thus, any days of delay for Office issuance of the patent more than 3 years after the filing date of the application, which overlap with the days of patent term adjustment accorded prior to the issuance of the patent will not result in any additional patent term adjustment. See 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B), 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A), and 37 CFR § 1.703(f). See *Changes to Implement Patent Term Adjustment Under Twenty Year Term; Final Rule*, 65 Fed. Reg. 56366 (Sept. 18, 2000). See also *Revision of Patent Term Extension and Patent Term Adjustment Provisions; Final Rule*, 69 Fed. Reg. 21704 (April 22, 2004), 1282 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office 100 (May 18, 2004). See also *Explanation of 37 CFR 1.703(f) and of the United States Patent and Trademark Office Interpretation of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A)*, 69 Fed. Reg. 34283 (June 21, 2004).

Further, as stated in the *Explanation of 37 CFR 1.703(f) and of the United States Patent and Trademark Office Interpretation of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A)*, the Office has consistently taken the position that if an application is entitled to an adjustment under the three-year pendency provision of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B), the entire period during which the application was pending before the Office (except for periods excluded under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B)(i)-(iii)), and not just the period beginning three years after the actual filing date of the application, is the relevant period under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) in determining whether periods of delay "overlap" under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A).

This interpretation is consistent with the statute. Taken together the statute and rule provide that to the extent that periods of delay attributable to grounds specified in 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1) and in corresponding §1.702 overlap, the period of adjustment granted shall not exceed the actual number of days the issuance of the patent was delayed.

In this instance, the relevant period under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) in determining whether periods of delay "overlap" under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A) is the period during which the application was pending before the Office, July 9, 2004, and ending on the date of filing of a request for continued examination (RCE), February 19, 2008 (not including any other periods excluded under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B)(i)-(iii)). The relevant period ends with the filing of the RCE as the three-year time frame specified in 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) does not

include the period subsequent to the filing of the RCE. 35
U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B)(i).

Pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(A) and 37 CFR 1.702(a)(1), 317 days of patent term adjustment were accorded during the pendency of the application for Office delay prior to the issuance of the patent. Pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) and 37 CFR 1.702(b), 225 days of patent term adjustment accrued for Office issuance of the patent more than three years after the date the national stage commenced under 35 U.S.C. 371(b).

All of the 225 days of patent term adjustment under 37 CFR 1.702(b) overlap with the 317 days of patent term adjustment under 37 CFR 1.702(a)(1). Entry of both the 317 days and the 225 days is neither permitted nor warranted. 317 days is the actual number of days issuance of the patent was delayed.

Accordingly, at issuance, the Office properly entered no additional days of patent term adjustment.

CONCLUSION

In view thereof, the Office affirms that the revised determination of patent term adjustment at the time of the issuance of the patent is 166 days (317 days of Office delay - 151 days of applicant delay).

The Office acknowledges submission of the \$200.00 fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.18(e). No additional fees are required.

Telephone inquiries specific to this matter should be directed to Kenya A. McLaughlin, Petitions Attorney, at (571) 272-3222.

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